

THE MARKET BEYOND NATIONALISM: CONSUMER CULTURE AND THE
TEXTILE MARKET IN EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY TIANJIN

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines how consumer culture took shape in the textile market of Tianjin under the conflicting ideas of nationalism and globalization in the early twentieth century. The study starts from an inquiry into the hybridization of the market. Through an analysis of sartorial advertisements, it shows that numerous forms of hybridity existed in the market and this often made it difficult to apply the binary Chinese and foreign rhetoric promoted by the National Products Movement. Product nationality was often ambiguously recognized, and this ambiguity was particularly noticeable in domestic products of foreign origin.

This study pays special attention to the advertising of the Haijing Wool Factory in order to see how domestic companies manufacturing products of foreign origin positioned their products in the complex market. I note that the company positioned its woolen fabrics not as a substitute for the imported woolen fabrics, but as a substitute for the Chinese conventional materials, silk and cotton. In other words, in spite of its Chinese nationality, the company did not take full advantage of the National Products Movement. The advertisements instead put an emphasis on wool's superiority over silk and cotton in quality, through which the company repeatedly highlighted the importance of an "economical" and "hygienic" mode of consumption.

This study argues that the rhetoric of superior wool versus inferior silk and cotton

became possible because of the inherent foreignness of woolen products. According to government standards, the Haijing woolen products were classified as national products. However, wool's foreign origin would have obviously affected consumers' perception of product nationality in a different way. Indeed, the hybrid nature of domestically produced woolen products made it difficult to clearly define their product nationality. Between these conflicting identities assigned to them, what the company decided to take for its advertising was the foreignness. The Haijing Wool Factory strategically used the products' foreign components in terms of origin, technology, and design, and its woolen textiles were successfully positioned as a superior substitute for deficient silk and cotton. In this consumer discourse, the national product sentiment promoted by the National Products Movement was almost absent.

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INTRODUCTION

A series of unequal treaties, signed after the first and second Opium Wars, required the Qing dynasty to open treaty ports to foreign trade, thereby reconstructing the economic, social, and cultural maps of China. The treaty ports, mostly located along with the eastern coastal area, started to function as a major point in which foreign powers directly interacted with local people, through not only their physical presence but also the numerous foreign goods introduced by them. The surge of foreign goods had an immediate influence on the local consumer culture, incorporating the local communities into the global market system. Thus, consumer culture emerged as an important indicator signifying a new phase in the development of Chinese society.

While globalization, represented by the foreign goods, was one of the key components defining consumer culture in early twentieth-century China, the other one, as a counterpart of globalization, was nationalism. Due to the unequal political and economic relationship between China and foreign powers, the Chinese government could not impose any tariffs on imports, and consequently, the domestic market was very vulnerable to the inflow of imported goods. This situation generated concerns about the dominance of imported goods and the collapse of the national economy among nationalistic industrialists, which eventually led to the creation of the National Products Movement (hereafter the Movement).

The Movement was initiated by silk industrialists who feared the spread of

Western clothes and the increase in the import of Western woolen fabrics.¹ Their anxiety reached its climax right after the Revolution of 1911 when the Republican government started to regulate Chinese people's appearance by abandoning the queue and changing the Chinese traditional gown to Western-style garments. The silk industrialists promptly responded to the regulation by establishing the National Products Preservation Association.² It initially started with representatives from eight Shanghai guilds but eventually became the most powerful organization that led the Movement, representing the voices of industries, students, and patriotic consumers.³ Finally in 1928, the newly established Nationalist government started to strongly back up the Movement.⁴ Under the auspices of the state, the Movement strove to nationalize consumer culture that was already under the influence of the global market. This thesis examines how consumer culture took shape in early twentieth-century Tianjin between the conflicting ideas of nationalism and globalization.⁵

For a more accurate understanding of consumer culture in those days, often complicated by the interactions between nationalism, globalization, and many other

¹ The cotton industry was relatively less influenced by the influx of foreign woolen fabrics, and this was probably due to the hierarchy of Chinese textiles. Silk, one of the typical luxury commodities, was often worn by the upper class, while cotton was a material for the common people. Therefore, imported woolen fabrics with higher prices did not affect the cotton industry as much as it did the silk industry. The people who could afford expensive foreign wools were the consumers who had previously used silk for their clothing materials.

² Karl Gerth, *China Made: Consumer Culture and the Creation of the Nation* (Cambridge; London: Harvard University Asia Center: Distributed by Harvard University Press), 68-74. In this book, Gerth extensively examines the development of the National Products Movement and the formation of Chinese consumer culture.

³ For the creation of the National Products Preservation Association and the incipient stage of the National Products Movement, see Gerth, 68-124.

⁴ The Nationalist government actively engaged in the movement by issuing the National Product Certification. Gerth, 194-197.

⁵ Globalization is often combined with consumerism. This study focuses more on globalization because I consider it the fundamental force that drove consumerism's rise in Chinese society with numerous foreign commodities being circulated in the globalized market system. Also, the criticism of National Products Movement targeted not consumerism in general, but the consumption of foreign products.

ideological and practical elements, we need to first clarify its major agents. Sherman Cochran in his study identifies three agents of Chinese consumer culture in the first half of the twentieth century: Western-based transnational “institutions” diffusing commodities, local “consumers” interpreting the representation of the commodities, and Chinese “brokers” mediating the diffusion and the representation.⁶ Distinguishing Western-owned Western medicine and Chinese-owned Western medicine, Cochran sheds new light on the Chinese owners of Western medicine as a “broker” of consumer culture mediating Western commodities and local consumers. His classification, however, by focusing on the process of localization of Western commodities, neglects other major dimensions of consumer culture, such as the circulation of Chinese-owned Chinese products which were often in competition with Chinese-owned Western products as well as Western-owned Western products.

I assume that, in a broad sense of diffusing commodities, more specifically, in the respect that both Chinese corporations and Western corporations manufactured commodities and promoted their sales, whether Chinese products or Western products, their role in consumer culture was basically identical, although their business strategies might have differed slightly or greatly. For this reason, unlike the categorization of Cochran, this study considers all the “institutions,” regardless of their nationality, as institutional agents of consumer culture. Cochran’s division of “institutions” and “consumers,” however, is still deemed valid in my study. In terms of agent, I presume that the basic structure of consumer culture starts from “institutional manufacturers” and

⁶ For more details on the classification of agents of consumer culture, see Sherman Cochran, *Chinese Medicine Men: Consumer Culture in China and Southeast Asia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 151-169.

“individual consumers,” which constitutes the market.⁷

Given that the Movement persistently attempted to regulate Chinese consumer culture, we need to include one more agent in addition to the manufacturers and the consumers. Karl Gerth’s study suggests that, although not directly, the final agents of consumer culture were the participants in the Movement. According to Gerth, these participants included a wide variety of social classes, such as preeminent commercial and industrial leaders, students, government officials, and numerous patriotic consumers.⁸ Of course, there obviously existed overlaps between the consumers, manufacturers, and the Movement participants. Any individual consumers could be ardent supporters of the Movement, but at the same time, unpatriotic consumers purchasing goods based on their personal interest. Also, institutional manufacturers could be either patriotic participants or treasonous manufacturers pursuing their own economic interest.

Although not all the participants had identical motives for taking part in the Movement,⁹ what classified them as part of the Movement was that they shared a common justification: protecting the national economy. Whatever their actual reasons were, nationalism underlay the Movement, and its ultimate goal was supposed to be achieved at national level. Hence the state became the pivot of the Movement around which all the participants united, although it did not lead the Movement in its initial stages. Entering the late 1920s and 1930s, as the Nationalist government started to

⁷ In terms of defining consumer culture, I follow Karl Gerth’s definition: “the consumption of branded, mass-produced commodities and the orientation of their social life and discourse around such commodities.” Therefore, individual manufactures or sellers are not considered for this study. See Gerth, 13.

⁸ For detailed explanation on the movement participants, see Gerth, 10-13.

⁹ For instance, the movement initially started by interest groups whose business was severely affected by foreign products. Their actual and direct motive for the Movement was an economic interest rather than nationalism.

directly engage in the Movement by issuing the National Product Certification,¹⁰ the state's leverage in the Movement became apparent. Because my study mostly centers around this time period, I treat the Movement as a state-sponsored Movement. Also, I consider the state and the Movement participants as the major agents of nationalism, while the consumers and manufacturers in the market were agents of globalization. My study examines the interaction of these agents.

According to Gerth, success or failure of the Movement depends on its criteria. Providing the example of the increasing trade deficit, he admits "the impossibility of nationalizing consumer culture in modern China." On "subtler cultural, institutional, and discursive grounds," however, he argues that the Movement was quite successful, because "[it] insinuated nationalism into countless aspects of China's nascent consumer culture, and this combination of nationalism and consumerism became a basis for what it meant to live in 'modern China.'"¹¹ As he states, the prolonged Movement and increasing trade deficit confirms that the Movement was not successful in nationalizing consumer culture. However, his emphasis on its cultural influence makes him de-emphasize the fact that the Movement did not succeed in economic terms in spite of its tremendous legacy.

Gerth's research does not provide detailed explanation as to why the movement did not fully succeed, and this is attributed to the fact that his study was mostly written from the perspective of the Movement. Much rhetoric on nationalistic consumption was produced and disseminated through the Movement propaganda,¹² but his research does

¹⁰ Gerth, 194-197.

¹¹ Ibid., 355-356.

¹² Gerth uses the general term "advertisement," but I consider the advertisements disseminated by the Movement are close to propaganda, differentiated from general commercial advertisements designed for the

not show whether the same rhetoric circulated through commercial advertisements in the market where actual transactions of commodities were occurring. That is, his study was relatively neglectful of the market side, and thus, does not speak about the consumers and manufacturers, whom the Movement strove to regulate. This thesis argues that at the site of marketing and consumption, the consumers and manufacturers were creating a completely different consumer discourse, mostly based on the quality not the nationality of the goods, and this is the reason why the Movement was almost lost in the market.

In order to support this argument, the study uses commercial advertisements as the main primary source. In the way that advertising is a channel through which an advertiser delivers a message to persuade consumers, it performs a similar function to propaganda. However, what makes it different from the propaganda is that the purpose for advertising does not lie in regulating consumers based on particular political ideas. Ad makers create advertising messages based on cultural contexts and marketing research, and try to serve consumer's needs.^{13,14} Consequently, the ad is a more consumer-oriented communication medium than the propaganda. It explicitly shows what a company wants to sell, but at the same time, indirectly signifies what consumers want to buy, and hence is the ideal source that tells us what kind of consumer discourse was created in the actual market.

In his research on consumption practices of everyday commodities, Frank Dikötter reaches the same conclusion that nationalism was not a dominant factor that determined consumer choices of ordinary people. He interprets the localization of

private profit of an independent company.

¹³ Juliann Sivulka, *Ad Women: How They Impact What We Need, Want, and Buy* (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2009), 17.

¹⁴ They also create new needs, but those needs are not entirely new ones that have nothing to do with current consumer culture. The needs suggested in advertising are closely connected to existing culture and consumer needs.

imported goods as “a two-tier economy,” in which the rich consumed imported goods to show their wealth and status, while the poor consumed “cheap imitations” generating copy culture. The Movement further encouraged this copy culture, and paradoxically, the spread of cheap “national” imitations led to the increase of expensive imports by the rich who wanted to differentiate themselves from ordinary people.¹⁵

I agree with Dikötter in the way that nationalism was not a primary consideration among common consumers, but the term “cheap imitations” oversimplifies the status of domestically produced goods of foreign origin. Through a case study of a domestic wool factory’s advertising, I will show that concern with price did not necessarily override concern with quality,¹⁶ but rather, quality-oriented consumer discourses were being created emphasizing the products were “economical” rather than just “cheap.” This study argues that the manufactures did not merely copy imports, but smartly took advantage of their foreignness to compete with its rival commodities by highlighting its superior quality that made an “economical” and “hygienic” mode of consumption possible.

This thesis limits the research scope, in terms of time and place, to the textile market of Tianjin in the early twentieth century. The majority of studies on modern Chinese history in the early twentieth century have focused on Shanghai, the biggest treaty port city. There is no denying that Shanghai played a central role in the development of commerce, economy, and culture in Republican China, but too much scholarly interest in the city led to the neglect of many other cities that contributed to the formation of modern China with different geographical, cultural, and economic background. Tianjin, China’s third largest city, is one of the places that has been less

¹⁵ Frank Dikötter, *Exotic Commodities: Modern Objects and Everyday Life in China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 39-48.

¹⁶ Dikötter, 45-46.

studied, in spite of its distinct historical significance.

Unlike Shanghai, Tianjin had been ruled by an international army for two years from 1900 to 1902, which assigned distinctive social, economic, and cultural circumstances to Tianjin.¹⁷ Also, while Shanghai had only two foreign zones, the French Concession and the International Settlement (primarily British), there were as many as eight different foreign concessions in Tianjin, including a Japanese, French, British, German, Belgian, Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and Italian Concession.¹⁸ This makes Tianjin quite an interesting city for the study of multidirectional interactions between Chinese and other foreign powers. Also, given that Tianjin was the central treaty port in North China, the study of Tianjin opens up a vast new regional focus quite different from Shanghai and its surrounding regions.

We can research consumer culture through various types of commodities, but among them, cloth is one of the few materials that we use on an everyday basis. Because of its quotidianness, cloth belongs to the most ordinary sphere in the material world, hence the study of the textile market will allow us to see how consumer culture, at the most quotidian level, took shape in Tianjin. When cloth is made into clothes, it is assigned more complicated personal and social identities. As part of everyday practices, clothes perform a function as a site where the most fundamental personal desires are revealed. Also, as a “social skin,”¹⁹ clothes are the site at which a mix of various social anxieties is expressed. These complicated meanings and values assigned to clothes

¹⁷ Ruth Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-port China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 13.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 10-11

¹⁹ “Social skin” is a term Terence S. Turner proposed in the article, “The Social Skin.” Turner illuminates the body as a signifier of social hierarchy in the case study of the Amazonian Kayapo. For details, see Terence S. Turner, “The Social Skin,” in *Reading the Social Body*, ed. Catherine B. Burroughs and Jeffrey David Ehrenreich (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1993 (1980)), 15-27, 29-39.

obviously differentiate them from other commodities.

Although categorized into the same group under the name of vestimentary culture, cloth and clothes have quite different significance in material culture studies. At least in the field of modern Chinese studies, clothes have been more extensively studied by scholars who are interested in reading various social identities and cultural symbols ascribed to them.²⁰ For the study of consumer culture, however, clothes are not the ideal subject. Clothes did not exist as a complete form of commodity in those days, and therefore, in order to have clothes, consumers first had to purchase cloth. In other words, the most important consumer decisions were made at the moment of purchasing the materials. Because this study centers on examining consumer culture not clothing culture, it limits the scope of research to textiles.

The major primary source for this study is the sartorial advertisements in the *Beiyang huabao* (北洋画報), a Tianjin-based pictorial newspaper. Starting from July 7, 1926, it continued to be published until July 29, 1937, when the Sino-Japanese war broke

²⁰ Antonia Finnane extensively examines the overall change of Chinese clothes during the Republican era in the context of gender, modernity, and nationalism. For details, see Antonia Finnane, *Changing Clothes in China: Fashion, History, Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008). On the relationship with clothes and changing gender roles in particular, see her other work, Antonia Finnane, "What Should Women Wear? A National Problem," in *Dress, Sex and Text in Chinese Culture*, ed. Antonia Finnane and Anne McLaren (Clayton: Monash Asia Institute, 1999), 3-36. For a more feminist-oriented study on women's appearance, in particular footbinding, see Dorothy Ko, *Cinderella's Sisters: A Revisionist History of Footbinding* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005). Ko's other study on women's shoes examines the introduction of high heels and the idea of modernity. For details, see Dorothy Ko, "Jazzing into Modernity: High Heels, Platforms, and Lotus Shoes," in *China Chic: East Meets West*, ed. John S Major (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 141-153. Meanwhile, several scholars have researched footbinding from a socioeconomic perspective, opposing the urban-modernity-centered approach. See Hill Gates, "Footloose in Fujian: Economic Correlates of Footbinding," *Society for Comparative Study of Society and History* 43(2001): 130-148; Laurel Bossen, *Chinese Women and Rural Development: Sixty Years of Change in Lu Village, Yunnan* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002). Studies on women's appearance in the Republican era inevitably involve the issue of modern girl. For studies on the modern girl, see Madeleine Dong, "Who Is Afraid of the Chinese Modern Girl," in *The Modern Girl Around the World: Consumption, Modernity and Globalization*, ed. Alys Eve Weinbaum and Modern Girl Around the World Research Group (Durham : Duke University Press, 2008), 194-219; Tani Barlow, "Buying In: Advertising and the Sexy Modern Girl Icon in Shanghai," in *The Modern Girl Around the World: Consumption, Modernity and Globalization*, ed. Alys Eve Weinbaum and Modern Girl Around the World Research Group (Durham : Duke University Press, 2008), 288-316.

out. Each edition was published twice a week until September 1928, when the company started alternate-day publication except Sunday. Founded by Feng Wuyue, the son of the president of Bank of China and also an intellectual educated in France,²¹ it aimed to disseminate current affairs, promote art, instill knowledge, and introduce fashion and science.²² Before the foundation of the *Beiyang huabao*, Tianjin readers' demand for pictorial newspaper was largely supplied by newspaper published in Shanghai. For this reason, the appearance of the *Beiyang huabao* marked a watershed in the media market of Tianjin.²³

Each edition of the *Beiyang huabao* consists of four pages. With a cover model in the center, various advertisements, mostly from fabric shops, department stores, and automobiles, were placed around the cover model on the first page. The second and third pages dealt with current political and international affairs, Chinese opera stars, celebrities, works of art, and small commercial advertisements. The last page was filled entirely with advertisements from various types of business. The advertising expense varied depending on the pages. As shown in Table 1, the first page was the most expensive and the last page was the least expensive.

The vestimentary advertisements generally appeared on the first page of the newspaper. Some of them were intermittently placed on other pages, but the cover page was the most favored by the fabric shops, tailor shops, and the department stores. Their consistent appearance on the cover page, which required the highest advertising cost, confirms that these shops enjoyed a thriving enough business to afford the advertising.

²¹ <http://www.hudong.com/wiki/%20《北洋画报》>

²² Canfei Zhu, “《Beiyang huabao》de xinwen chuanbo yanjiu” (A study on the dissemination of *Beiyang huabao*) (MA thesis, *Hunan shifan daxue*, 2009), 13.

²³ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

This also implies that the products in these advertisements need to be differentiated from the low-priced goods sold by street vendors in the market. Given that the advertising expense eventually counts toward the final price of commodities, we can conjecture that these products were generally middle-priced goods, or at least lower-mid-priced goods. Consequently, in terms of price, this study does not cover the whole textile market of Tianjin. Numerous street vendors and many other smaller-scale shops, which did not run an advertisement in the newspaper but probably occupied an important component in the local textile market, are excluded from the study. This study centers on the consumer culture that took shape in the limited market for the elite and middle class consumers.

The first chapter of this study assesses the overall landscape of the Tianjin textile market. It examines almost 1,600 issues of *Beiyang huabao* published from July 1926 until July 1937. Given that each edition contains 5 vestimentary advertisements on average, this study investigates almost 8,000 advertisements. In analyzing these advertisements, it pays special attention to the available options (both ready-to-wear clothes and textiles), the range of prices (from high-priced goods to relatively low-priced goods), the place of manufacture (foreign and Chinese), the available shopping venues (tailor shops, fabric shops, and department stores), the ownership of the shopping venues (Chinese-owned and foreign-owned), and the format and contents of the advertisements. From this analysis, the first chapter shows the diverse, hybridized, and complex nature of Tianjin fabric market.

The term, “hybridity,” is a debatable concept. According to Dikötter, “the extraordinary complexity of material culture, produced by endless acts of creative appropriation, can hardly be explained in terms of ‘hybridity’...The notion of the ‘hybrid’

fails to take into account the perspectives of historical agents, who did not necessarily see a clash in the juxtaposition of different objects.”²⁴ He instead suggests “diversity” to describes a mixture of sartorial objects. However, “hybrid” is still unconsciously used by Chinese historians when explaining a mixture of different styles.²⁵ Also, the “hybridity” observed in my study does not simply refer to the coexistence of different styles or a mixture of different objects. It encompasses a multidirectional mixture of sartorial objects, shopping places, and sartorial practices, and the term, “diversity” is not sufficient to explain this cultural phenomenon. Following the definition of hybridization by William Rowe and Vivian Schelling, “the ways in which forms become separated from existing practices and recombine with new forms in new practices,”²⁶ I will use “hybridity” to describe the mixture of sartorial forms in new sartorial practices widely observed in the advertisements.

Among many other components of this hybridity, this study pays special attention to the emergence of domestic woolen products as a critical variable that complicated the textile market dynamics in relation to the National Products Movement. The second chapter focuses on the advertising of the Haijing Wool Factory, one of the most successful Chinese woolen factories, to see how the domestic woolen company positioned²⁷ its products in the complex market. The Haijing Wool Factory carried its advertisement in the center of the first page in almost every edition of *Beiyang huabao*

²⁴ Dikötter, 265.

²⁵ See Paola Zamperini, “On Their Dress They Wore a Body: Fashion and Identity in Late Qing Shanghai,” *positions: east asia cultures critique* 11:2 (2003): 307; Peter Carroll, “Refashioning Suzhou: Dress, Commodification, and Modernity,” *positions: east asia cultures critique* 11:2 (2003): 450, 469.

²⁶ William Rowe and Vivian Schelling, *Memory and Modernity: Popular Culture in Latin America* (London; New York: Verso, 1991), 231.

²⁷ “Positioning” is a marketing term, which refers to the process of defining a niche in the market and create an image or identity of the product. I use the term “positioning” as introduced in Al Ries and Jack Trout, *Positioning : The Battle for Your Mind* (New York : McGraw-Hill, 1986), 5-10.

from September 1, 1932 until July 29, 1937. The chapter closely examines approximately 800 pieces of its advertisements. The analysis of these advertisements shows that the company positioned its woolen fabrics not as a substitute for imported woolen fabrics, but as a substitute for conventional Chinese materials, silk and cotton. In spite of its Chinese nationality, the company did not take full advantage of the Movement. It rather put emphasis on wool's superiority over silk and cotton in quality, through which it repeatedly highlighted the importance of an "economical" and "hygienic" mode of consumption. I will illuminate how the inherent foreignness of wool and the domestic woolen products' ambiguous nationality influenced the creation of this comparative rhetoric that parallels the rhetoric of Chinese deficiency and Western superiority suggested by Ruth Rogaski in her study on hygienic modernity in Tianjin.

The company's emphasis on quality does not necessarily mean that it did not participate in the Movement at all. The National Product Certificate placed in several advertisements demonstrates that the company did not entirely distance itself from the Movement nor disobeyed government regulations. Through a close examination of the advertisements, however, the final chapter argues that the propaganda of the Movement remained very superficial in the advertising. Instead, the Haijing Wool Factory greatly leaned on its foreign technology and latest designs imported from Europe and America. I argue that this was possible because of the ambiguous product nationality assigned to the products. Depending on how they were defined, the Haijing woolen products could be both foreign and national. The final chapter shows that between these conflicting identities, what the company decided to tout in the advertising was not nationalism but the products' foreignness.

Table 1. Advertising costs in *Beiyang huabao*, as of January 1, 1928

The page	The advertising cost in Chinese dollars (the advertisement size)		
The first page	6 (a quarter)	4 (one-eighth)	3 (one-sixteenth)
The second & third page	8 (the whole)	5 (a half)	4 (one-third)
The last page	6 (the whole)	4 (a half)	3 (one-third)

CHAPTER 1

THE COMPLEX MARKET: GLOBALIZATION AND HYBRIDITY

The inflow of various foreign vestimentary items greatly diversified consumer choices. The diversity was observed not only in the types and origins of commodities but also in the price, quality, available shopping malls, the styles of fashion, and the ways of advertising. Some of these components did not merely coexist with each other as part of diversity, but rather hybridized into a different way of practices. Women in Chinese-style clothes with Western-style makeup or the qipao made of imported fabric demonstrate this. This chapter cautiously examines the various versions of hybridity caused by globalization, and its implications for the classification of national products and foreign products, and ultimately, the implementation of the Movement.

In 1926, when the first issue of *Beiyang huabao* was published, its advertising section was almost totally occupied by automobiles and phonographs. It was not until September, 1927 that the first vestimentary advertisement, excluding shoes, appeared in the newspaper. *Laojiuzhang* (老九章),²⁸ primarily dealing in silk, was the first fabric shop that ran its advertisement in the newspaper,²⁹ which was shortly followed by

²⁸ The Chinese character means “old ninth Zhang.” Zhang is a surname.

²⁹ *Beiyang huabao*, September 7, 1927.

Zhenxing gaodengyangfudian (振興高等洋服店),³⁰ and many other shops including *Dunqinglong* (敦慶隆),³¹ *Liguyanghang* (力古洋行),³² and *Yuanlonghao* (元隆號).³³ These shops often functioned both as a tailor shop and a retail shop for fabrics. In those days ready-to-wear clothes were not widespread in China, and thus, in order to purchase one's clothes, the client should first visit the fabric and tailor shops, choose the fabrics, and have the garment made.³⁴

The shops, without exception, advertised that tailors were adept at making both Chinese and Western clothing for female and male clients. Among others, the most typical items were the qipao, women's overcoats, and men's suits. While silk was most popular for the qipao, for the overcoat and Western-style suits, woolen fabric was favored. The place of production of these textiles was not limited to China. The fabric shops overtly advertised that items from various foreign countries and regional specialties from across China are all available. Before the establishment of the Chinese wool industry, the demand for Western-style clothes was entirely supplied by imported woolen fabrics. Even silk was imported. *Liguyanghang*, for instance, specialized in dealing with Indian silk.

The vestimentary advertisement, usually placed on the first page of the newspaper, consists of four main parts: the shop name, a visual image, a brief advertising copy, and contact information. The images in Figure 1 are the typical advertisements in this format. For the image, a figure of a woman or a man wearing the garment made in that very shop was widely used. By showing off the figure in trendy styles, the advertiser attempted to

³⁰ It means "revitalizing advanced Western-style clothes shop."

³¹ It means "sincere, congratulant, prosperous."

³² It means "Li Gu foreign trading company." Li and Gu are surnames.

³³ It means "primary, prosperous shop"

³⁴ Finnane, *Changing Clothes in China: Fashion, History, Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 116. For the specific process of manufacture, see Hazel Clark, *The Cheongsam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 34-37.

attract immediate interest from consumers. The advertising copy, consisting of short phrases, supplemented the advertisement with more practical information on the products and service. It often focused on “new arrivals,” “latest fashions,” “reasonable price,” and “a wide range of items from China and foreign countries.” The advertisements rarely included specific price data, but during the annual sale, they invariably included the words “big sale.” Also, almost every new season, the design of the advertisements, in particular the visual image, changed to a new one.

The visual images of the advertisements in Figure 1 allow us to observe the hybridization of various materials and styles. For instance, the women in the advertisement of *Laojiuzhang* are clad in knee-length qipao made of Indian silk. Both of them are wearing high-heels, and the woman on the right side is donning a fur-attached jacket. Also, their hair is bobbed. Are they, then, in Chinese style or Western style? Although the main garment, qipao, is originated from a traditional Chinese garment, the other elements of their appearance, including the way of wearing the qipao and their poses, confirm that it is safe to say that their style is rather a hybrid between Chinese and Western styles.

In China, those women in knee-length qipao and bobbed-hair were often called *modeng xiaojie*, the Chinese term for the modern girl. The emergence of the modern girl was a global phenomenon in the early twentieth century. Although the United States played a key role in distributing the modern girl image throughout the world, the process of Americanization was not uniform.³⁵ The idea of the *modern girl* was introduced under

³⁵ The Modern Girl Around the World Research Group, “The Modern Girls as Heuristic Device: Collaboration, Connective Comparison, Multidirectional Citation,” in *The Modern Girl Around the World: Consumption, Modernity and Globalization*, ed. Alys Eve Weinbaum and Modern Girl Around the World Research Group (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 5.

many different names such as flappers in America, *garçonnnes* in France, *moga* in Japan, and *modeng xiaojie* in China. It did not have absolute and universal criteria that defined her appearance.³⁶ There was a general agreement on the modern girl look such as “specific commodities” and “provocative fashion,”³⁷ but the diffusion of the modern girl look definitely involved a transnational process in each nation. For this reason, the main garment constituting the modern girl look in China was the qipao, not the knee-length skirt that gained universal popularity as a general uniform dress of the modern girl in Europe and the United States. The appearance of Chinese modern girl was, indeed, a hybrid fashion, and the frequent appearance of these modern girls in the advertisements signifies the pervasive hybridity in Chinese vestimentary culture.

The hybridization was not limited to the style of fashion. The fabric shops running an ad on *Beiyang huabao* were generally located in modern Western-style buildings in the foreign concessions. That is, even if the client purchased Chinese silk for Chinese garments, her visit to *Laojiuzhang* in a Western-style building, shown in Figure 2, was probably an entirely different experience from shopping in conventional places. The Western-style building necessarily added a foreign dimension to the client’s purchase of Chinese silk, thereby hybridizing consumption practices.

The hybridity in spatial aspects is more obviously observed in the advertisements for *Zhongyuan gongsi* (中原公司), the first Chinese-owned department store in Tianjin. On January 1, 1928, the national capitalists, Huang Wenqian (黄文谦), Lin Ziheng (林子恒), and Lan Zanxiang (蓝赞襄), who were deeply influenced by the idea of protecting the nation by strengthening Chinese business, established the first large-scale

³⁶ Ibid., 5, 19.

³⁷ Ibid., 1.

Chinese-owned department store in Tianjin.³⁸ Shortly after its grand opening, *Zhongyuan gongsi* started to run an advertisement in the *Beiyang huabao*, and continued advertising until 1937, when the newspaper was no longer published. Its first advertisement, in Figure 3, with a picture of the building and detailed information on the composition of each floor, lasted for three months, occupying a half of the last page. Unlike the fabric shops, the department store did not contain an image of the modern girl in its advertisements. Instead, it continuously used the picture of its Western-style building with a tram running in front of it. Although the department store often emphasized that it dealt primarily in Chinese products, the visual image of the Western-style building definitely assigned a “modern” and “Western” identity to the department store. *Zhongyuan gongsi* assigned the entire second floor of its six-story building to the clothing division. It was divided into four areas, which included fabrics, Western clothes, millinery, and dress accessories.

Zhongyuan gongsi was not the only department store in Tianjin. It was the first Chinese-owned department store in the city, but before its foundation, there already existed foreign-owned department stores. Whiteaway Laidlaw & Co., Limited (hereafter Whiteaway) with its head office in London and 46 branches across the world as of 1932, opened its Tianjin branch in 1913. The primary medium it used for running its advertisements was the Peking-Tientsin Times, a Tianjin-Beijing-based English daily newspaper. From March 1, 1930, it also placed advertisements in the *Beiyang huabao*, although for only three months, using its Chinese company name, *Huiluo baihuogongsi* (惠罗百貨公司). Foreign department stores were originally developed to meet the needs

³⁸ <http://tianjin.enorth.com.cn/system/2004/12/22/000929858.shtml>.

of Westerners in the city, but soon advertised for Chinese consumers.³⁹ Presumably, making use of a Chinese medium was an attempt to attract even more Chinese consumers.

What is noteworthy from its advertisements in Figure 4 is that they included some ready-to-wear clothing for men. From men's pants to shirts and jackets, almost every male vestimentary item shown in the advertisements was ready-to-wear. By contrast, for women's clothing, ready-made items were limited to rain coats, hosiery, and scarves. Unlike men's clothing, none of the women's skirts or jackets were advertised in ready-to-wear form. What Whiteaway instead supplied for women's choices were fabrics. By suggesting the materials which the consumers could make into either a qipao or a Western-style garment, Whiteaway was offering more flexible options to its Chinese female consumers.

Scholars have argued that Chinese preferred home-made or tailor-made clothing over ready-to-wear imported clothing, even among those who could afford it, because the imported ready-to-wear clothes did not fit Chinese people.⁴⁰ This argument, however, does not explain Whiteaway's advertising of ready-to-wear clothing for men. Also, if there was sufficient need for ready-to-wear imported clothing among Chinese consumers, import companies probably ordered more small-sized items. Most of all, to simply consider it as a problem of fit, the popularity of Chinese traditional clothing was still too high.

The Chinese consumer's inclination toward tailor-made clothing was rather due to the unabated popularity of Chinese traditional clothing. In women's clothing, in particular, the qipao started to gain huge popularity in the 1920s with urban Chinese women.

³⁹ Finnane, 97.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 115.

Although it was originated from the traditional Chinese men's robe, its form-fitting silhouette together with the latest pattern designs, successfully transformed the traditional men's robe into the fashionable women's garment.⁴¹ Under these circumstances, the ready-made imported clothing could not beat the tailor-made qipao. Whiteaway probably penetrated the Chinese female consumers' taste, and decided to advertise its imported fabrics, which could be made into whatever the consumers wanted. The figure of a woman in qipao in Figure 4, never seen in the Peking-Tientsin Times, is explicit evidence that supports Whiteaway's customized marketing strategy.

The advertising of Whiteaway clearly shows the hybridization of female clothing culture, in particular among the wearers of qipao. While almost maintaining the silhouette of traditional garments, they actively embraced imported materials with different patterns and color combinations. Although they were wearing qipao, when it comes to the materials, none of them was wearing entirely Chinese clothing. It was rather a hybrid fashion in which both Chinese and Western components intermingled with other, and this hybridization was an indisputable result of globalization. A surge of imported fabrics, not only in department stores but also in many other small-scale fabric shops, definitely incorporated the Tianjin textile market into the global market system, generating hybrid clothing culture.

Amid the influx of foreign textiles, the consumers probably started to develop some general sense about imported goods and domestic goods. One of the most direct factors affecting the notion of imported goods was the prices. Imported textiles, in particular woolen products, were generally regarded as more expensive than domestic

⁴¹ For a general history of the qipao, see Finnane, 139-175.

textiles.⁴² However, they were not equally expensive. There were wide variations in prices within the imported products, sometimes much bigger than the difference between domestic goods and imported goods. Table 2 shows a certain type of imported fabric could be five times more expensive than the cheapest one. There also were price differences even within the same type of textile, depending on the condition and texture of the yarn. Tweeds were generally marked as the woolen fabric in the lowest price range. In 1932, when Whiteaway was on sale, coating tweeds with a 56-inch width started from 2.5 Chinese dollars per yard.⁴³ In 1933, when the Haijing Wool Factory, a domestic woolen company, was on sale, it supplied woolen products starting from 2 Chinese dollars per yard.⁴⁴ The imported woolen products were slightly more expensive, but the difference was not significantly huge. Among imported textiles, relatively low-priced items definitely existed, some of which were comparable to domestic goods. In other words, not all the imported textiles were absolutely high and not all the domestic textiles were unconditionally cheap. A wide variety of prices existed in both groups, and there certainly was an overlapping section. The diverse prices allowed consumers whose budget came under the overlapping price range, to have more flexible choices between imported textiles and domestic ones.

Together with the hybridity observed from many different components of clothing culture, a wide range of prices renders the division of domestic products and foreign products quite blurry. Is the qipao made of Indian silk a Chinese product or a foreign product? Is shopping for Chinese products in a Western-style building modern or not? Do

⁴² For cotton and silk, it might be the opposite. One example from the Nankai index shows that Japanese cotton fabric was sometimes cheaper than domestic ones. In this paper, imported goods generally refer to woolen products.

⁴³ Peking-Tientsin Times, October 11, 1932.

⁴⁴ *Beiyang huabao*, September 21, 1933.

we consider wearing the qipao with bobbed hair as Chinese style or foreign style? Are all the imported goods absolutely more expensive than the domestic goods? Finally, how do we define Chinese products and foreign products? Examining the advertisements, this chapter proved that it is not easy to answer these questions. The diversity and hybridity caused by globalization ultimately made the market too complex to apply the foreign and domestic dichotomous criterion, and I suggest this is the immediate reason why the Movement did not succeed in the market.

Among many other variables, this study particularly pays attention to the emergence of domestic woolen textiles, as a hybrid of foreign origin and domestic manufacture, and considers this as the primary factor that further complicated the textile market in relation to the development of the Movement. In the complex market, then, how did domestic wool manufactures position its product and how did consumers respond to its marketing? And finally, was there any consideration of the Movement in the consumer discourse being created by the manufacture and the consumers? The following chapter aims to answer these questions through a case study of the Haijing Wool Factory, the first domestic woolen company established in Tianjin.



Figure 1. The advertisements of small-scale fabric and tailor shops. From the left, *Liguyanghang*, *Laojiuzhang*, *Dunqinglong*, *Yuanlonghao*.⁴⁵

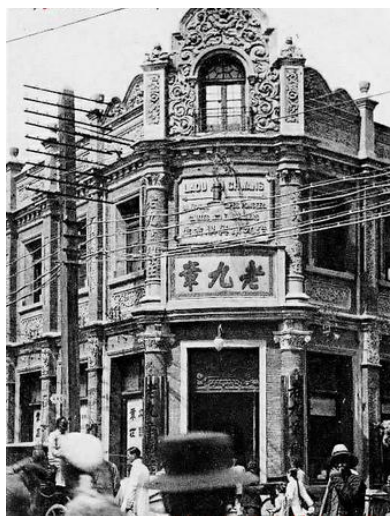


Figure 2. The building of *Laojiuzhang*.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ From the left, *Beiyang huabao*, October 27, 1928; August 1, 1929; September 3, 1929; March 28, 1931.

⁴⁶ <http://www.022tj.net/BBS/read.php?tid=1418>

品貨球環辦統

中原公司

貨國華中銷推

諸葛大街星界租日許天設開
八七四二 五九五一 局總電

Figure 3. The advertisement of Zhongyuan gongsi.⁴⁷

會大覽 長料衣

Printed Voiles

Printed Voiles

Printed Voiles

Figure 4. The advertisements of Whiteaway Laidlaw & Co., Limited.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ *Beiyang huabao*, March 10, 1928.

⁴⁸ From the left, *Beiyang huabao* April 8, 1930; May 1, 1930; March 1, 1930.

Table 2. The price range of imported fabrics at
Whiteaway Laidlaw & Co., Limited.⁴⁹

Fabric	Usual price (per yard)	Sale price (per yard)	Width (inch)
Chiffon velvets	11.95	8.5	38
Rich wool velour	9.75	6.95	54
Tricotine	9.5	6.95	54
Satin face wool cloths	9.75	6.95	54
Coating serge (pure wool)	8.95	6.5	54
Jacquard velour	8.75	6.5	54
Wool velour	7.95	5.5	54
Wool velour	6.95	4.5	56
Nap curl coating	5.95	2.95	56
‘Army’ grey serge	5.95	3.95	56
Coating serge	4.95	2.95	54
Gabardine	8.95	6.5	54
Gabardine	5.95	3.95	54
Gabardine	5.95	3.95	54
Gabardine	4.95	2.95	54
Tweeds	3.95	1.95	54
Tweeds	2.95	1.95	40
Tweeds	2.75	1.95	54
Darroch tweeds	2.75	1.5	40
Merrick tweeds	2.5	1.5	40

⁴⁹ Peking-Tientsin Times, January 8, 1924.

CHAPTER 2

QUALITY MATTERS: MEANINGS OF BEING

ECONOMICAL AND HYGIENIC

This chapter focuses on the emergence of domestic woolen products and its implications for the domestic textile market. With a particular emphasis on the diversification of woolen fabrics into “foreign woolen fabrics” and “domestic woolen fabrics,” Chapter 2 sheds light on how the advent of the domestic woolen industry complicated the dynamics of the textile market and the implementation of the Movement. Through an analysis of the Haijing Wool Factory’s advertising, this chapter shows that the first domestic wool factory in Tianjin positioned its woolen products not as a substitute for imported woolen textiles but as a substitute for Chinese conventional materials, silk and cotton. In the process of advertising, the company often emphasized the importance of quality-based consumption in order to be “economical” and “hygienic,” and in spite of its Chinese nationality, “patriotic” sentiment encouraged by the Movement was almost absent in the ads. I will argue that this consumer discourse is not the company’s own idea but rather a mirror of prevalent notion of society, using Ruth Rogaski’s study on hygienic modernity.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-port China*.

To address the significant implication of domestic woolen fabrics for the textile market and the Movement, we need to first discuss the brief history of Chinese textile. For centuries, Chinese have used cotton, silk, and hemp as the main materials for clothing. While hemp was particularly preferred in summer, cotton and silk were widely used in all seasons. Chinese also used wool, especially in winter, but its sartorial use was fundamentally different from other materials. Unlike silk, cotton, and hemp, wool did not go through the process of spinning and weaving. Almost maintaining its original conditions, wool was used in a form of fur being attached to other materials to provide an additional function of protecting people from the cold. In this way, Chinese often used wool to make fur-lined cotton or silk coats. In Chinese vestimentary culture, at least before the twentieth century, wool was not a material from which they wove cloth. Consequently, they did not consider wool as a substitute for cotton and silk which they wove into textile and eventually made into a complete garment.⁵¹

With the introduction of Western clothes in the late nineteenth century, Chinese clothing culture began to enter a new phase. Chinese people, in particular from the well-educated upper class, gradually embraced Western attire and the trend continued to accelerate in the early twentieth century.⁵² The adoption of Western-style clothes involved not only a change of style but also the advent of new materials. The important characteristic of Western clothes was that they were largely made of woolen fabrics.

⁵¹ For a general history of Chinese clothing, particularly during the Qing dynasty, see Verity Wilson, *Chinese Dress* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1986); Valery M. Garrett, *Chinese Clothing: An Illustrated Guide* (Hongkong; New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); John Vollmer, *In the Presence of the Dragon Throne: Ch'ing Dynasty Costume (1644-1911) in the Royal Ontario Museum* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1977). For the use of materials in particular, see Wilson, 85-114; Garrett, 191-210.

⁵² On the change of Chinese clothing in the late 19th century and the early 20th century, see Antonia Finnane, *Changing Clothes in China: Fashion, History, Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); Eileen Chang, "A Chronicle of Changing Clothes," *positions: east asia cultures critique* 11:2 (2003): 427-441.

Since the wool spinning & weaving industry did not exist in China in those days, China had to rely entirely on imported woolen textiles to meet the increasing demand for Western clothes, which inevitably posed a threat to the conventional Chinese textile industry.

In 1911, the Republican government issued a regulation that required a change of clothing style from the Chinese traditional gown to Western-style garments, and several silk industrialists promptly responded to this by establishing the National Products Preservation Association (hereafter NPPA). The NPPA saw that the industry most threatened by the change in clothing was the silk industry. Because China did not have a spun wool industry yet, the NPPA argued, the change to Western clothes would inevitably increase the import of Western woolen textiles, which would necessarily destroy the Chinese silk industry that played a central role in the Chinese economy. The NPPA opposed the government regulations, not because of the foreign style, but because of the economic effects that the imported woolen textiles would have on the silk industry.⁵³ The constant petitioning and lobbying of the NPPA came to fruition in 1912 when the government issued a new regulation, which reincluded Chinese traditional garments for ordinary clothing and prescribed that only domestically produced textiles could be used both for Chinese and Western clothing style.⁵⁴

In spite of the regulations and the continuing Movement, foreign woolen textiles continued to dominate the market. From the enduring popularity of woolen fabrics, some shrewd Chinese industrialists saw the marketability of woolen products, and they finally

⁵³ Gerth, 101-102.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 109-111.

began to manufacture domestic woolen textiles.⁵⁵ With the emergence of domestic manufacturers, woolen fabrics, formerly considered as an obvious symbol of “foreign products,” diversified into “foreign woolen fabrics” and “domestic woolen fabrics.” Also, the position of woolen fabrics within the Movement consequently shifted from a target of criticism to an object of protection, which complicated the dynamics of the textile market.

From the overall point view of the Movement, the establishment of the domestic wool factory was unquestionably a positive sign. By substituting for the imported goods, the domestic woolen products could probably buttress the Movement. Also, several domestic wool factories that appealed for the national product sentiment had respectable success in the market.⁵⁶ For the silk industry, however, the domestic wool products had more complicated implications. When the NPPA was first created, its main concern was not about the influx of foreign silk but foreign woolens fabrics.⁵⁷ Thus, the National Products Movement in the textile market was often defined as “domestic silk versus imported wool,” that is to say, the nature of the movement was not only a struggle between national products and imported goods but also a competition between silk and wool.

The newborn wool industry presumably expanded its consumer base to include potential consumers who had repressed their desire to consume woolen products due to the Movement, as well as the previous consumers of foreign woolen textiles. Consequently, domestic woolen products emerged as a new menace to the silk industry

⁵⁵ Gerth, 182. Gerth does not explain how well the regulations worked, but the continuing popularity of imported woolen textiles implies that the regulations were not strictly enforced.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ This also raises a gender issue. Wool was mostly used for men’s Western suit, which means the competition between imported wool and domestic silk primarily occurred in men’s clothing. Later in 1930s, when women’s qipao, a counterpart of men’s Western suit gained popularity, wool started to be used for the material of women’s clothing, which included the qipao and overcoats worn over it.

and the silk industry ended up competing not only with imported woolen textiles, but also with domestic woolen textiles. Under the circumstances, the Movement was a double-edged sword to the silk industrialists. Paradoxically, the coming of domestic wools placed the silk industry in quite a difficult situation, in which the consolidation of the Movement advantaged not only the silk industry, but also its emerging competitor, the wool industry.

The continual activities of the Movement, along with the undiminished demand for woolen fabrics, may have had positive impacts on the development of the domestic wool industry. However, the case of the Haijing Wool Factory (海京毛織廠; hereafter Haijing), one of the most successful domestic woolen factories, shows that not all the wool factories leaned heavily on the Movement for the promotion of their products. The dynamics of the textile market, in particular after the appearance of domestic woolen textiles, was too complicated to apply dichotomous foreign and domestic criterion. Amid the flood of diverse textiles, both from foreign countries and home, domestic industries needed to establish their own keen strategies, sometimes far beyond the appeal for nationalism, to increase their market share. Given that advertising is a contact point between a manufacturer and a consumer, Haijing's ads are one of the most direct and accurate sources from which we can assess the company's marketing strategy. Through analyzing its advertising, the rest of this chapter examines how the Haijing positioned its woolen products in the complex textile market.

Haijing, established in 1926, was the first woolen mill in Tianjin. As of 1937, there were about twenty woolen-cloth mills in China. While most of them were small-

scale factories, Haijing was one of the few large-scale factories in China.⁵⁸ From September 1, 1932 when Haijing's first advertisement appeared in the *Beiyang huabao*, until July 29, 1937, when the last edition of *Beiyang huabao* was issued, the company ran an advertisement on the front page of almost every edition of the newspaper, as shown in Figure 5. The fact that it continually put its advertisement on the most expensive first page confirms that it enjoyed a thriving business. In 1935, the advertisements started to include information on Haijing's branches in Shanghai, Qingdao, Hangzhou, and Hong Kong, which also demonstrates the success of its business.

What is one can observe throughout the advertisements is an emphasis on the quality, price, and design. Slogans such as “style is fashionable” (花樣入時), “material is pure” (質料純淨), “price is low” (價格低廉), and many similar phrases appeared consistently in the ads. The way in which the advertising delivered these messages to the consumers changed over time. In the earlier editions, published in 1932 and 1933, the typical format of the advertisements was to enumerate a few catch phrases, each consisting of four Chinese characters. Entering 1934, however, the advertisements started to include quite lengthy texts in addition to those catch phrases. The text often assumed the form of a speech in which the company provided surprisingly concrete product information to persuade consumers to buy its woolen products.

With very few exceptions, the long advertising copy emphasized the good quality of woolen products. The four salient advantages of wool were repeatedly stressed, that is, it was “light” (輕), “warm” (暖), “durable” (耐久), and “soft” (軟). Explanations of other features, for instance, “the color does not fade away,” “it does not get shiny,” “rich in

⁵⁸ Chien-yin Chin. *Wool Industry and Trade in China Tientsin* (Tientsin: Hautes Études ; Shanghai: Université l'Aurore, 1937), 92-93.

flexibility,” “it is hydrophilic” also accounted for a major part of the advertising copy. To accentuate the merits of its woolen products more effectively, Haijing often compared its products to rival commodities, which were not the foreign woolen textiles but Chinese silk and cotton fabrics:

It is very difficult to choose materials for changpao.⁵⁹ Cotton is plain and simple, but hardly protects people from the cold. Silk is luxurious but frail. As for artificial silk, its color is mediocre, its quality is fragile, and it is not elegant. Speaking of our woolen fabric, the color does not fade away even after cleaning and drying in the sun. It does not wrinkle nor shrink. It does not get shiny even after a long time. It is refined and stylish. It can be enjoyed by any people regardless of the status. Indeed it is an ideal first-rate material both for men and women.⁶⁰

No matter what types they are, silk and cotton fabrics have drawbacks. First, the colors easily change. Second, they easily get shiny, in particular at the bottom of the sleeves, chest, and buttocks. Third, they easily get wrinkled, and fourth, they easily get fluffy. Now that society is in recession, people all think that physical circumstances are difficult. If people make new clothes, it is impossible to avoid the four significant drawbacks discussed above. The clothes will not wear well and will get damaged. That would be discouraging. We guarantee that our pure woolen fabrics do not have any of the defects discussed above. Our woolens have long been loved by thrifty men and had great prestige...⁶¹

Maintaining this comparative format, the company created various versions of advertising copy customized for different items including not only clothing materials but also blankets. In particular, after 1934, the comparative format was the most predominant way of advertising, through which the Haijing continually stressed the superior quality of wool over cotton and silk. In pointing out the flaws of cotton and silk, the advertising provided very specific and detailed information, thereby developing a convincing argument to persuade consumers to buy Haijing’s woolen products.

One might argue that, whatever marketing strategy they developed, its target was

⁵⁹ It refers to traditional Chinese men’s robes.

⁶⁰ *Beiyang huabao*, December 26, 1935.

⁶¹ *Beiyang huabao*, March 9, 1935.

limited to Western-style clothes. However, the company's argument for changing from silk and cotton to wool did not necessarily mean a change from Chinese-style clothes to Western-style clothes. By suggesting that consumers make a qipao and changpao with woolen fabrics, it emphasized that consumers could make use of the superior quality of wool while still maintaining a traditional style. Through this strategy, the company attempted to increase its market share beyond the Western-style clothing market, and by suggesting the new material for tradition garments, it also added a layer of hybridity in Chinese vestimentary culture. The existing qipaos made of woolen fabric in those days demonstrates that the company's argument did not end in advertising.⁶²

The advertising did not just resort to enumerating the specific advantages of wool for the sake of promoting the woolen products. In order to arouse consumers' interest in the importance of quality, it rather developed the advanced argument that quality-based decisions would finally lead to an "economical" way of consumption. Among many other good features of wool, it emphasized "durability" for this purpose:

A cotton blanket in the market costs three or four dollars and you can use it for two years. A pure woolen blanket lasts for twenty years, and its durability surpasses the cotton. The selling price only exceeds once or twice the cotton one. Please compare what you lose and gain.⁶³

Haijing recognizes that the initial cost price of woolen fabrics is higher than that of cotton. It suggests, however, that consumers should judge which one is eventually more economical by comparing not only price but also durability. Inducing consumers to understand the difference between "cheap" and "economical," it emphasizes that buying Haijing woolen products is, in the long run, a wiser choice, offsetting its slightly higher prices. These advertisements often included the term, *jingjijia* "a thrifty person" (經濟家),

⁶² Clark, 38.

⁶³ *Beiyang huabao*, October 26, 1935.

in the title or the main body of the advertisement copy, and convinced the consumers, in order to be a truly thrifty person, they must choose durable Haijing woolen products. In this way, the advertising did not merely promote the products, but rather developed a larger consumer discourse on the importance of an economical mode of consumption.

According to the advertising, the word *jingji* “economical” (經濟) does not merely mean buying cheap. It rather refers to quality-oriented reasonable consumption, and this allows us to refute that Dikötter’s interpretation of foreign-originated domestic products is not applicable to all cases. He proposes the term “cheap imitations” to define domestically manufactured products of foreign origin. According to him, ordinary people generally preferred domestic imitations with low prices, while the rich purchased imported originals, which created “a two-tier economy.”⁶⁴ Dikötter states that “concern with price would often override concern with quality, even if the cost in the long term would be higher.”⁶⁵ Haijing’s advertising shows, however, not all the foreign-originated domestic products were “cheap imitations.” The continual emphasis on the quality and the importance of economical consumption shown in the advertisements confirms that quality-oriented consumer discourse was being lively created emphasizing “economical” rather than merely “cheap.”

If *jingji* was one feature of consumption discourse being created by the advertising, the other one was *weisheng* “hygienic” (衛生). The concept of hygiene was often addressed in relation to the “warm” nature of wool. Here again, with very specific, scientific evidence, Haijing asserts that its woolen products are the right ones for keeping a person healthy and hygienic:

⁶⁴ Dikötter, 39-48.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 45-46.

Woolen fabrics are particularly able to protect people from the cold. In the gap between the fibers, wool retains more air than cotton and silk. The heat that comes out of the body does not easily access the outside air, and it is even more difficult to be released. The Haijing factory products are woven only using pure wool, hence the fiber is especially long and the ability of protecting oneself from the cold is particularly good.⁶⁶

Due to its distinct function of keeping warm, a woolen blanket was especially often discussed in comparison to cotton bedding, and the emphasis was placed on the correlation between the cold, hygiene, and wool. The Haijing launched woolen blankets aiming not only at winter but also summer. While the winter blanket mostly focused on its function of protecting oneself from the bitter cold of the northern China, for the summer one, the company directed the focus to the chilly air on a midsummer night. The comparison format with other fabrics, in particular with cotton bedding, does not fail to appear in the summer advertising:

A summer night is chilly and people are susceptible to disease, and yet one piece of woolen blanket is enough...A few people have a sort of misunderstanding that the woolen blanket is not proper in hot weather because its characteristic is warm. Consequently, people habitually use thin cotton bedding or double-layered bedding. In order to take care of our health, we definitely should cover ourselves with bedclothes at night. The merits of the woolen blanket is that it is light, warm, and soft, and it is good at absorbing moisture, which benefits hygiene. No cotton double-layered bedding can be compared...⁶⁷

The concern for hygiene inevitably involved the process of manufacturing. After purchase, wool goes through several preliminary treatments before the process of spinning, which include grading, willowing, washing, drying by baking, loosening, and regulating with special machinery.⁶⁸ Since wool is collected from the body of animals, raw wool contains many impurities including insects, hence the stage of washing would have been particularly important for manufacturing clean and hygienic products. In the

⁶⁶ *Beiyang huabao*, December 5, 1936.

⁶⁷ *Beiyang huabao*, August 3, 1935.

⁶⁸ Chin, 94.

advertisement for camel wool, Haijing gives a detailed description of this process and highlights its hygienic method:

Our camel wool is collected in Xikou.⁶⁹ We process, sort, and clean it, and then manufacture it with a machine. Later we disinfect it in a scientific way. It is free from insects, and it is light, warm, and flexible. It smells good, and is different from goods being sold in the market. You can make it into bedding or clothes. It is much warmer than leather and goose down. It does not have the drawbacks of silk. One pound of camel wool equals 4 pounds of cotton. To be a person who cares about hygiene and economy, why don't you try it on?⁷⁰

The cited advertisement, indeed, shows the intermingled concerns for “hygiene” and “economy.” By using the words “scientific” (科學) and “disinfection” (消毒), the advertisement directly addresses the critical issues relevant to the hygienic method of manufacture. It also suggests that hygienic products are not only insect-free but also odor-free. The economy is again being emphasized by comparing the quantity of cotton needed to get the same amount of heat. Above all, Haijing compares its camel wool not only with cotton and silk but also with leather, goose down, and “other goods being sold in the market,” which obviously shows the diverse and complex nature of the textile market.

Through repeated emphasis on quality, the company ultimately attempts to impress on consumers the importance of a “hygienic” form of consumption. I argue that this hygienic discourse is not the company's own idea but rather a mirror of prevalent notion of hygiene in the society. According to Rogaski, *weisheng* was “an instrumental discourse informing the Chinese elite's vision of a modern ideal, a vehicle through which they hoped state, society, and the individual would be transformed.”⁷¹ Although the term *weisheng* existed before the foreign presence, the meaning of *weisheng* in the 1920s and 1930s, greatly affected by the West and Japan, was interpreted as a critical element

⁶⁹ This refers to the gates in the western part of the Great Wall.

⁷⁰ *Beiyang huabao*, November 15, 1934.

⁷¹ Rogaski, 300.

needed to bring “hygienic modernity” to Chinese society. Indeed, Rogaski argues, *weisheng* was a prevalent idea among people in Tianjin, and this allows us to confirm that Haijing’s appeal for hygiene was nothing less than a reflection of general sense of the society, and thus, it would have successfully resonated with the consumers.

Pointing out *weisheng* was associated with a desire for modernity, often marked as foreign, Rogaski argues that consumers could easily achieve hygienic modernity by purchasing imported hygienic commodities such as medically approved underwear or beauty products.⁷² However, Haijing’s ads show that ascribing the meaning of hygiene was not limited to imported goods. Even domestic products, if they were of foreign origin, could be commodities through which consumers could achieve hygienic modernity. In other words, although Haijing’s products were domestically produced, wool’s foreign origin made it possible for the company to assign hygienic identity to its woolen products. Regardless of the place of manufacture, woolen products would have been easily associated with foreignness, which allowed the company weave hygiene discourse into its advertising.

Now this explains why the company contrasted its domestic woolen products with domestic silk and cotton, not imported woolen fabrics. By comparing wool with silk and cotton, the company touted its foreignness, although not directly, and this strategy was well supported by the idea of hygiene. The rhetoric of Chinese deficiency and Western superiority, which Rogaski pointed as a key component observed in the *weisheng* discourse,⁷³ was continually reproduced in the form of silk and cotton deficiency versus wool superiority. The place of manufacture did not really matter in the advertising. What

⁷² Ibid., 225-233.

⁷³ Ibid., 301-302.

differentiated domestic wool from domestic silk and cotton by assigning a superior status was the place of origin. Wool's foreign origin was not directly stressed in the ads. However, as an underlying component that defined the identity of Haijing woolen products, the foreignness of wool was strategically used for in the advertising.

Haijing had an insight into the complex nature of the textile market in which product nationality was ambiguously defined. The movement defined national products as domestically manufactured products, but this definition certainly had a limitation to consider the hybrid nature of domestically manufactured products of foreign origin. From the perspective of the Movement, Haijing's products were obviously national products,⁷⁴ but the perceptions in the market could be plural. Haijing's ads show that the company took the perception based on the foreign origin for its advertising, and consequently, they did not have to resort to the Movement. Haijing tried to differentiate its domestically produced textiles from numerous other domestic materials by highlighting the superior quality of wool, and for this purpose, an appeal to the national products sentiment was not an effective strategy. The advertising copy sometimes included the phrase saying "domestically produced pure wool," but the context in which the phrase was situated was not one of nationalism but of the purity of the material, a critical factor in deciding the overall quality of the products.

This, however, does not mean that the company did not care about imported woolen textiles at all. The slogans that say "cheaper than imported goods" and "wears longer than imported goods" appeared as part of the company logo since the appearance of its first advertisement. However, the ad provided hardly any concrete information to

⁷⁴ The state issued the National Product Certification to the company.

support its superiority over imported woollens as it did in its comparison with silk and cotton. The comparison with imported products or the concern about them was not discussed in depth, which confirms that imported woolen textiles were not an object of the prime consideration. The slogan for the superiority over imports was no more than a customary phrase.

In this chapter, I argued that Haijing primarily touted the superiority of wool over cotton and silk in quality, emphasizing an economical and hygienic mode of consumption. The company effectively used wool's foreign origin, although not in a manifest way, for this purpose, and the propaganda of the Movement was almost absent in the advertising. I noted the ambiguity of defining product nationality, which will be further discussed in the following chapter. Paying particular attention to the state's standards for defining national products and its superficial presence in Haijing's advertising, the last chapter will examine how Haijing situated itself between its ambiguous nationalities.



Figure 5. The typical advertising space of the Haijing Wool Factory.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ From the left, *Bei yang huabao*, May 13, 1933; December 27, 1934.

CHAPTER 3

AMBIGUOUS NATIONALITY: SELLING NATIONAL

PRODUCTS OF FOREIGN ORIGIN

Haijing frequently included phrases emphasizing the place of manufacture, such as “domestically produced pure wool,” in its advertisements. However, the context in which the company situated this phrase was not very germane to nationalism. It was used instead to highlight the purity of the material, a critical factor in deciding the overall quality of the products. Indeed, the tendency of including nationalistic phrases in a way that did not fully accord with the thrust of the Movement continued throughout its advertising. In spite of the fact that Haijing was issued the National Product Certificate by the state, it did not resort to the Movement nor nationalism for the advertising of its products. While the previous chapter focused on the implied foreignness associated with wool, this chapter argues that the company overtly emphasized its foreignness, in terms of technology and design, and strategically used the products’ foreignness at various stages of manufacture, both directly and indirectly.

In 1928, the newly established Nationalist government started to issue National Product Certifications (國貨證明書). The NPPA had been issuing certificates for a decade, but now the state government started to get involved in an economic sector that previously had been controlled by local elites, by directly supervising the certification

process. On July 8, 1928, Minister of Industry and Commerce Kong Xiangxi announced of the purpose of the certifications:⁷⁶

Since the establishment of this ministry, we have spared no efforts to promote national products. Recently, when one investigates market conditions for various products, one discovers that foreign products are being falsely labeled national products and deceptively sold for unethical profits. Unless we carefully examine and verify genuine articles and fakes, we will be unable to protect capital and stem its outflow. For this reason we have stipulated and issued nine regulations governing the issuing of National Product Certifications.⁷⁷

Every company was required to go through this certification procedure for its products, and then if the results met the proposed standards, the ministry issued a certificate to the company. The companies, whose products were certified as domestically produced, were finally asked to include the certificate in their advertising.⁷⁸ Haijing printed their certificate in most of the editions of the *Beiyang huabao* published in February, 1934.

The advertisement with the certificate, in Figure 6, consists of two parts. The certificate was placed in the upper part, and the lengthy advertising copy was put below. The text, interestingly, does not include any mention of the certificate:

... First, it is light and warm. Our woolen fabric, woven entirely from the new wool of sheep, maintains body temperature, does not change at all over time. Second, it is soft. All the woolen fabric is made of pure sheep's wool, and there is nothing that is not soft. If it contained any impurities, the result would definitely be the opposite. Third, it is firm. Because the material is extremely pure, Haijing woolen fabric is durable to wear. Having run our business for almost seven years, the amount of fabric we sell annually is already tens of thousands of yards, and so far, we have not heard that we had any defects. You can surmise its durability. Fourth, it is beautiful. Our factory has communicated with various textile art research institutes in Europe and America. Therefore, we can immediately provide new designs and new colors. The colors and designs all follow the latest fashion,

⁷⁶ Gerth, 194.

⁷⁷ Ibid. I cited Gerth's interpretation. For the original text, see Xiangxi Kong, "Guomin Zhengfu Gongshang bu ling gongzi di 55 hao" (National Government Ministry of Industry and Commerce order no. 55) (July 8), in Hu Guanming et al. 1994: 1475.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 194-195.

and young men and women are fond of our products. The color does not fade even after washing and drying in the sun. We have all kinds of merits as discussed above, so our products are well received in all social circles. In addition, because we spin and weave the cloth ourselves, our prices are low...⁷⁹

As usual, it discusses the special merits of the woolen products using concrete examples, which are mostly about the good quality, trendy designs, and the reasonable prices. At the end of the text, the company mentions that the factory itself manufactures the textiles, but this was not to live up to the “patriotic manufacture” and “ethical sale” promoted by the ministry, but rather to explain that its products were inexpensive. Throughout the advertising copy, Haijing did not use any language that speaks directly to the purpose of the certification. Under government edict, Haijing put the certificate in the ad, but the consistent quality-centered text shows that the company neither sympathized with nationalism urged by the state, nor took advantage of their certification. The certificate was completely divorced from the text, and so was nothing more than a cosmetic document, at least in the advertisement. It seems obvious that Haijing included the certificate only because it was required to do so.

The emphasis on mutual exchange with textile art research institutes in Europe and America, discussed in elucidating the products’ trendy designs, further solidifies the gap between the certificate and the advertising copy. If the company truly intended to align with the government’s call to “buy Chinese,” it should have attempted to hide any possible ties to foreign countries. Instead, Haijing advertised its close relationship with foreign institutes, which seemingly did not accord with the purpose of the National Product Certifications. The coexistence of these explicitly incompatible components makes sense only when considering that the basic requirements for the issuing of

⁷⁹ *Beiyang huabao*, February 22, 1934.

certifications were capital, management, raw materials, and labor.⁸⁰ Design was not among the primary elements.

Depending on the extent to which Chinese resources were utilized, in terms of those four components, national products were organized into seven grades:

Grade 1: Chinese capital, management, materials, and labor.

Grade 2: Chinese capital, management, and labor, but the use of small amounts of non-Chinese raw materials or a few foreign technicians.

Grade 3: Chinese investment using capital borrowed from abroad, but Chinese management, materials, and workers; or a few foreign technicians.

Grade 4: Chinese capital, management, labor, and primarily foreign materials; or the analogous situation with foreign technicians.

Grade 5: Chinese capital borrowed from abroad, Chinese management and labor, primarily foreign materials; or the analogous situation with foreign technicians.

Grade 6: Chinese capital borrowed from abroad, Chinese management and labor, and mainly foreign raw materials; or the analogous situation with foreign technicians.

Grade 7 (added within a few years): Chinese labor, management, and workers, but all foreign materials; or the analogous situation with foreign technicians.⁸¹

The seven categories show that national products, according to the definition by the state, did not mean the products produced using only domestic production factors. The government designated four factors as critical components necessary to decide the product's nationality, but even within these standards, a certain flexibility and exceptions were allowed, which led to the creation of seven different grades. As long as the company was managed by the Chinese, it was allowed to use foreign materials, capital, or labor, either partially or entirely. The only unassailable factor was the management, which was the most important component in making products "national."

The design of products was not regulated by the government. In other words, the origin of the design was not considered a chief component affecting the certification of

⁸⁰ Gerth, 196.

⁸¹ Ibid., I cited Gerth's interpretation of the seven official grades. For the original document, see Boyuan, Zhu, "Guohuo biao zhun" (National Products standards), SSC 1936: 13-15.

Chinese national products and the assignment of particular grades. Presumably, this was the reason why Haijing overtly stated the foreign influence on its designs, even under the surveillance of the state. Since design was not a factor regulated by law, Haijing could make the best use of trendy designs that immediately reflected global trends in pattern designs for the promotion of its woolen products. At least according to the definition of “national products” suggested by government standards, the phrases about trendy design, did not run counter the National Product Certifications.

While the state took a firmer stance towards the management, it was particularly magnanimous toward foreign technicians. Except for grade one, the standards contained an exception clause that companies could employ foreign technicians if necessary. This implies that the government was well aware of the importance of technicians and by extension, technology, even if imported from foreign countries, in developing the national economy. The reason why the state specified the use of foreign technicians in the standards was that technicians were considered to be labor, one of the four important components. Technology per se, however, was not among the four factors. Like design, the use of technology was not separately regulated by the government. That is, even the companies that greatly relied on foreign technology could produce the first-grade national products, as long as they met the requirements for the four primary production factors.

Not long after Haijing ran the advertisements with their certificate, it started to publish a new ad, as shown in Figure 7. On April 3, 1934, the company began to include the newly adopted company logo, a whale in the sea, in the center of the advertisement. What is noteworthy is the phrase written in English above the logo, which reads “made by Elbrook Woolen Mill.” Elbrook, Incorporated was an American-owned company

established in 1924, which managed carpet weaving factories in Tianjin with its head office in the British Concession of the city.⁸² It was the first company that started spinning woolen yarn with machinery.⁸³ It is unclear how high the profile of Elbrook was in the Tianjin market. However, even people who had no idea what Elbrook was about would have easily recognized that it was foreign from its sound. The phrase was even written in English. A considerable number of readers, except for educated people who could at least read the English copy, probably did not know what it meant, and furthermore, how it was pronounced. But because they could not read it, they obviously understood it was foreign.

In less than two months, the company logo with the English slogan occupied the place where the National Products Certificate used to be. This, however, does not signify that the government abruptly rescinded its policy on regulating national products. Also, given that the company was awarded its certification just two months prior, it was impossible that their entire line of products were suddenly being “made by Elbrook Woolen Mill.” Then, what does the phrase exactly signify? What parts of the products were made by Elbrook Woolen Mill? The copy placed in the same advertisement provides some clues:

Haijing has gained a firm trust from people because of its long history, up-to-date facilities, first-rate technology, and the use of the highest quality domestic wool... If you feel that imported goods are expensive, and domestic products cannot satisfy you, please visit us. You will definitely be able to obtain excellent fabrics.⁸⁴

The text clearly states that the company uses domestic wool. Then, it is highly

⁸² The legal case between Elbrook, Incorporated and the Tianjin Magistrate on the issue of buying bonds provides some brief information about the company. For details, see *Memorandum of the American Chamber of Commerce of Tianjin Relative to Extraterritoriality in China*, 17-19.

⁸³ Xianting Fang, *Tientsin Carpet Industry* (Tientsin: Chihli Press, 1929), 23.

⁸⁴ *Beiyang huabao*, April 3, 1934.

likely that the company had the Elbrook Woolen Mill engage in the processing of the raw materials, by outsourcing particular procedures, or by borrowing or purchasing facilities and technology from Elbrook. In either case, it seems obvious that the Elbrook, the first factory that started manufacturing machine-made woolen yarn entered into a connection with Haijing, by taking charge of particular technical aspects in manufacturing the completed products. The emphasis on the facilities and technology in the text also supports this assumption. Until May 31, 1934, when the English slogan no longer appeared in the advertisements, the advertising copy often included phrases about superior technology and the latest facilities together with the slogan. In this context, Elbrook was important to Haijing not simply because of its foreignness, but also because of its brand name associated with the latest technology.⁸⁵

The inclusion of the English slogan could have been a target for punishment under governmental scrutiny. The reason why Haijing could continue these advertisements for almost two months was that they were mostly about technology, which was not regulated by the standards. The ads also show that even the English words were allowed, as long as the contents did not go against the standards. Indeed, the standards for the National Product Certification did not require all the national products to be manufactured in a completely nationalistic way. There obviously existed loopholes in the law, and Haijing took full advantage of them.

Haijing's attitude that actively embraced the foreignness of the product and its

⁸⁵ The relationship between Elbrook and the Haijing is not clear. Elbrook was established in 1924 and specialized in carpet weaving and export. It was one of the only three factories manufacturing machine-made yarn in Tianjin. Haijing was established in 1926, specialized in woolen cloth, and one of the few large-scale woolen factories in China. In Xianting Fang, *Tientsin Carpet Industry* (Tientsin: Chihli Press, 1929) Elbrook's Chinese name is introduced as *haijing* (海京), and this suggests that the companies were different but very close. I assume that Haijing might be a sort of affiliated company of Elbrook, managed by Chinese, but with some capital or technological aid by Elbrook. I will reserve this for future research.

connection to global trends is observed in other advertisements as well. When advertising its camel woolen fabrics, for instance, Haijing often included phrases saying that “the camel woolen materials for overcoats has been treasured by the ladies in Europe and America,” “British and American gentlemen like to wear an overcoat made of camel wool fabric,” “camel wool blankets have won high praise in America,” and “camel wool blankets are considered a precious item in Europe.” By emphasizing the international recognition of the material, Haijing attempted to give much greater legitimacy to the purchase of its products. This type of illustration was not, of course, limited to foreign ladies and gentlemen. Haijing also argued that its products were approved by Chinese people across all social circles. What is noteworthy here is that, in introducing consumer reviews about the materials, Chinese nationality for the promotion of nationalism did not really matter. The realm of factors, which the company regarded as significant in promoting the sales of its products was far more global.

Within the scope of the law, Haijing often crossed the boundary of nationality in terms of design, technology, consumer reviews, and setting up its rival commodities. Despite the fact that its products were domestically produced, Haijing did not take full advantage of the Movement. The advertising often included the words, “domestic materials,” in the text, but the context was not how it was intended by the Movement. The company used the words only to emphasize the purity of the raw materials or its inexpensive prices. It also intermittently used the term, “domestic labor,” but the frequency was not that high. The company certainly cooperated with the government by including the National Product Certificate in its advertising, but did not resort to it to promote sales.

This chapter illuminated that Haijing, which could have been the biggest beneficiary of the Movement, did not fully take advantage of it. Its stance on the Movement and the National Product Certification remained passive and superficial, while it was active in advertising its foreign-oriented technology and design. Satisfying the minimum requirements of the government, the company embraced any foreign components of its products. I argue that the company was well aware of the complexity of the market and the ambiguity in defining product nationality. Under these circumstances, what they appealed to consumers was not the Chinese nationality defined by the government standards based on four production factors, but its foreign nationality associated with design, technology, consumer taste, and the origin of wool per se. Haijing woolen products could be both Chinese and foreign, and the primary identity the company decided to assign to its products was its foreignness, presumably because they thought it would be a better strategy for their business.



Figure 6. The Haijing advertisement with the National Product Certificate.⁸⁶

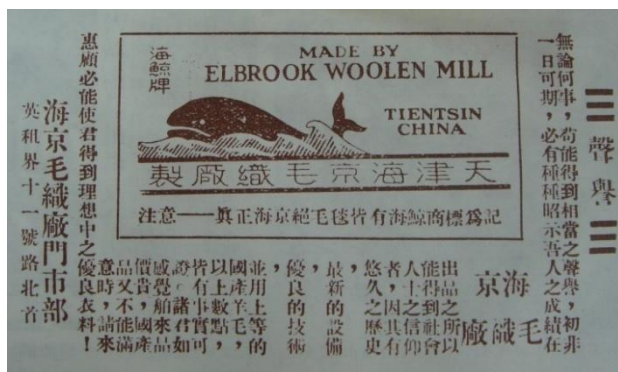


Figure 7. The Haijing advertisement with the Elbrook logo. A whale in the sea, which the company used as a company logo, first appeared on April 3, 1934. The pronunciation of whale, “*jing*,” is a homophone of the “*jing*” of Haijing (海京).⁸⁷

⁸⁶ *Beiyang huabao*, February 22, 1934.

⁸⁷ *Beiyang huabao*, April 3, 1934.

CONCLUSION

This study starts from an inquiry into the hybrid nature of the textile market in early twentieth-century Tinajin. Through the analysis of sartorial advertisements, it illuminated the numerous forms of hybridity created in the market, and noted that these hybridities often made it difficult to apply the simple Chinese and foreign standard, hence complicated the implementation of the Movement. In order to nationalize consumer culture, the state suggested official standards to certify national products based on the major product factors including management, materials, capital, and labor. However, the standards were not sufficient to encompass many other unofficial components, such as origin, design, and quality that greatly affected consumers' perception of product nationality.

This ambiguity was particularly noticeable in the case of domestic products of foreign origin, and this paper focused on Haijing in order to see how the domestic wool factory positioned its products in the complex market and how the Movement affected its marketing strategy. Its almost 800 pieces of ads run in *Beiyang huabao* show that the company positioned its woolen products not as a substitute for imported woolen textiles but as a substitute for domestic silk and cotton. Haijing continually touted wool's superiority over silk and cotton in quality, emphasizing the importance of an economical and hygienic mode of consumption that could be only achieved through purchasing its good-quality woolen products. In this discourse the propaganda of the Movement was

almost absent.

The rhetoric of superior wool versus inferior silk and cotton exactly corresponds to the rhetoric of Chinese deficiency and Western superiority that Rogaski pointed out in her study. I argue this rhetoric becomes possible because of the inherent foreignness of woolen products. According to government standards, Haijing woolen products were classified as national products, but its foreign origin would have obviously affected consumer's perception of product nationality. Indeed, the hybrid nature of domestically produced woolen products made it difficult to clearly define their product nationality. Between these conflicting identities assigned to domestic woolen products, what company decided to take was its foreignness. Haijing strategically used its foreign components in terms of origin, technology, and design, and its woolen products were positioned as a superior substitute for inferior silk and cotton.

Haijing's adherence to this marketing strategy implies that the quality-oriented consumer discourses well resonated with the consumers. If not, the company would have definitely turned its focus to other aspects of the products. The pervasive notion of hygiene, examined in the study of Rogaski, also supports my view that the hygienic discourse was not the company's own idea. However, given that the advertising was mainly designed to deliver messages of a manufacture, this study based on the analysis of advertisements still has a limitation to represent the consumer side. Although it is true that advertising cannot be successful without considering cultural and social context, in order to discuss more about the consumers' response to the company's advertising and the discourses disseminated through it, we need to consider other types of sources as well such as consumers' direct comments or sales records after the advertising.

The inquiry into the business of Haijing and the wool industry in Tianjin also leaves much room for further research. Tianjin was the number one center for collecting and exporting wool, and its volume far surpassed the one of Shanghai. The raw materials were primarily collected from Qinghai, Gansu, and Mongolia, which were inhabited by numerous minority groups. A further research on the development of the wool industry in Tianjin will inevitably encompass the examination of the local economy of these regions and economic interactions with the buyers in Tianjin and the suppliers in the hinterland, thereby shedding new light on the study of Tianjin and the Northwestern hinterland. Given that collected wool was largely exported to foreign countries, the research on the wool industry necessarily connects to the global history in the early twentieth century. Tianjin exported not only raw wool but also carpets, which gained huge popularity in the globe. A study on these items, either wool or carpets, would allow us to see how Tianjin performed its function as a major center in the global wool market. A further research on foreign-owned companies who decided to establish their own carpet factories in Tianjin, such as Elbrook, and their business connections to domestic companies would also shed new light on the business history of Tianjin and China.

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